

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Canistota School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2003-2004**

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Dates of On Site Visit: January 21 and 22, 2004

Date of Report: February 4, 2004

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.

Meets Requirements The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.

Needs Improvement The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.

Out of Compliance The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.

Not applicable In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

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| Principle 1 – General Supervision |
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee noted the district has identified systems for receiving documented referrals, has surveyed administrators, teachers, parents, and reviewed files. The district has policies and procedures, which address child, find and have file reviews, surveys, and documentation supporting their referral procedures per local, state, and federal regulations and guidelines.

The steering committee stated the district follows the state and federal regulations, and the local comprehensive plan regarding the placement and services of students voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, has evidence of appropriate policies and procedures through the file reviews, surveys, and adherence to the rules, regulations and state approved comprehensive plan.

The steering committee noted the district uses the relevant school data to analyze and review their progress toward the state performance goals and indicators, follows and adheres to the state guidelines for reporting of students suspended, expelled, or dropped out as per the reports required by the state regulations and Table B of the school district's state report indicates the school district employs and contracts with personnel who are fully licensed or certified to work with children with disabilities.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting the requirements for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Preschool age
- School age
- Surveys
- Age at referral
- Comprehensive Plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee stated current practices and past reviews from the state and federal special education monitoring demonstrate the school district provides FAPE for all children with disabilities.

The steering committee reported no suspensions or expulsions for students with disabilities for more than 10 cumulative days in a year.

The steering committee noted training is provided for administrators on the policy and procedures regarding the removal of students with disabilities.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meets requirements for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State tables G, H, I, J,
- Comprehensive plan
- Surveys
- Parent and Teacher report forms
- Parent form for information
- TAT information
- Teacher file reviews
- Initial referral

Meets requirements

The Canistota School District has policies and procedures, which identify state and federal regulations in this area. The district follows set regulations and requirements set forth by the state office for testing instruments. Policies and procedures, file reviews and parental surveys indicate the IEP team considers all evaluations to determine a category of disability.

The district has identified policies and procedures for proper re-evaluation requirements, and utilizes state eligibility testing procedures to ensure students are appropriately evaluated for continuing eligibility.

Needs improvement

80% of parents surveyed indicated that they did receive a copy of the evaluation results.

The steering committee stated the district does not use a variety of tests for functional assessment.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting the requirements for appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee with exception of items listed under “Out of Compliance”.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as needing improvement. Through interviews and student file reviews, the team noted parents did not consistently receive a copy of the evaluation results and some special education staff did not understand functional assessment, how to report the information and how to use the information to drive the IEP.

Out of Compliance

ARSD 24:05:25:02 Determination of needed evaluation data

As part of an initial evaluation or reevaluation, the individual education program team and other individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to interpret evaluation data, determine what evaluation data is needed to support eligibility and the child's special education needs.

In all student files reviewed, with the exception of students with disabilities in the areas of speech/language and developmentally delayed, the monitoring team found students were given a Behavior Assessment for Children. Interview with special education teachers indicated that the Cornbelt Cooperative has directed districts to complete behavior assessment on all students suspected of a disability in which a psychological evaluation is requested. The behavior assessment is completed as a precautionary step in the event of long-term suspension of the student. Students potential concerns in areas such as behavior should drive the selection of evaluation tools. Based on this information, the monitoring team concluded the district does not consider the child's individual needs when making the determination of needed evaluation data.

ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures

The evaluation team must consider a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child, including information provided by the parents. Information. Through the review of twelve student records, the monitoring team found the district staff gathers data from classroom teachers and complete diagnostic assessment to use as functional information in the evaluation process. During interviews, special education staff reported a lack of understanding concerning reporting functional assessment. The monitoring team noted a written summary of functional information was not consistently included in the evaluation report or in the present levels of performance. The students' present levels of academic performance, their progress in the general curriculum or development of annual goals and short-term instructional objectives therefore did not link to evaluation.

ARSD 24:05:25:06 Reevaluations

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Transition services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives, and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Through review of five student files and staff interviews, the monitoring team noted transition evaluations were not administered prior to age 16 to assist in developing transition services and activities.

ARSD 24:05:27:21 Transition to preschool program

The monitoring team noted that one student was not evaluated when moving from the Part C (early intervention) to Part B (special education) of IDEA. The student was determined eligible and placed on the child count as hearing impaired but there was no comprehensive evaluation to support the disability category. The team considered only information from an audiological and a tympanogram along with

information from the previous evaluation, which was completed when the child was identified under Part C (early intervention).

Issues requiring immediate attention

Evaluate student:

A student listed on the child count as hearing impaired must be reevaluated to determine eligibility under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State Table L and M
- Surveys
- Parental Rights document
- Public awareness information
- Teacher file reviews
- Comprehensive plan
- Consent and prior notice forms
- FERPA disclosure

Meets requirements

The steering committee reports district policies and regulation requirements, parental surveys and file reviews indicate the district ensures notification to parents of their rights and has training, policies and procedures for surrogate parents.

The steering committee stated the district has policies and procedures ensuring parents fully understand for what activity consent is being sought and the district's policies and procedures provides all parents the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning their child in the provision of a free and appropriate public education and FERPA.

The steering committee reported the district has policies and procedures to address complaint issues and the district adheres to the federal, state, and local policies and procedures regarding requests for due process hearings should there be one.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting the requirements for procedural safeguards as noted by the steering committee.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Student progress data
- File reviews
- Surveys

Meets requirements

The steering committee reported the district has policies and procedures in place for the provision of an appropriate IEP team. File reviews and parent surveys indicate the procedures are being followed and the district utilizes written notices with the required content to all parents and/or guardians.

The steering committee noted the district utilizes an appropriate IEP format and ensures that each IEP contains the required content and has procedures and policies in place for IEPs to be appropriately developed and in place for each eligible student. The district shows annual goals are measurable and annual reviews were completed within the 365 day time period.

Needs improvement

The district uses functional assessments to write annual goals and objectives and has transition data in files for students 14 years of age or older.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the areas identified as meeting requirements for individual education programs as noted by the steering committee with the exception of the issue noted under the section “Out of Compliance”.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for individual education programs as noted by the steering committee.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program

By age 14, life-planning outcomes, employment and independent living, are to be identified for each student on an IEP. The files reviewed included life planning outcomes, however, they were statements of current activities rather than based on the student’s future. Example of Outcome Oriented Process:

(Employment: Family farm / Living “lives at home on their farm...with his parents....” and

Employment: Daycare / Living Independent).

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions; consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State tables E, G, I, J, and F
- File reviews
- Surveys

Meets requirements

The school district has policies and procedures in place for addressing the least restrictive environment of students.

Behavioral Intervention Plans have been written for students who require them.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting the requirements for least restrictive environment with the exception of the issues identified in “Out of Compliance”.

Out of Compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:14 Individual educational program accountability

Each school district must provide a child in need of special education or special education and related services with services in accordance with an individual educational program and make a good faith effort to assist the child to achieve the goals and objectives or benchmarks listed in the IEP. Through review of files, interviews with special education teachers, regular education teachers and administrators, the monitoring team noted not all regular education staff implement the necessary modifications and accommodations found in student IEP’s. In ten student files from 4th through 12th grade, the monitoring team noted the students were removed from the classroom 500 to 900 minutes a week. Students are failing regular education classes due to lack of implementation of modifications and accommodations by some regular education staff. Therefore, special education teachers are teaching replacement content area classes and students are spending a significant amount of time removed from age appropriate peers.